

SAN DIEGO COUNTY
Juvenile Mentally Ill Offender (JMIO) Program – (\$1,424,038 grant)

This project, which will serve between 100 and 120 youth in the central, eastern and southern regions of the county, involves an expansion of an existing Multisystemic Therapy (MST) program and implementation of Assertive Community Treatment (ACT).

The use of MST or ACT, both of which involve the provision of intensive services, depends on which of these evidence-based practices is more appropriate for the youth depending on the severity of their primary diagnosis. MST is provided to wards of the juvenile court with such diagnoses as oppositional defiant disorder and conduct disorder, while ACT is provide to wards diagnosed with such mental illnesses as schizophrenia and mood disorder.

Three multi-disciplinary teams are responsible for case management and treatment provision. Each team is comprised of a therapist who has obtained MST certification, a therapist who has been trained in ACT, and a deputy probation officer (who handles all case management responsibilities). A licensed mental health clinician supervises the clinical staff, and each team has access to the services of a psychiatrist, educational specialist and substance abuse counselors. Consistent with the MST and ACT models, the teams share responsibility for ensuring the availability of services on a 24/7 basis. For MST, which is a family-based treatment program, each MST therapist will have a caseload of four to six families and provide services for four to six months. The length of service provision for youth enrolled in the ACT component varies.

Although not required by the grant, the county is undertaking a comprehensive evaluation of the ACT component of the project and is incorporating efforts to address disproportionate minority contact with the juvenile justice system.

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